

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated June 29, 2005. Claims 1, 3, 5-7, and 9-11 remain pending in this application. Claims 1, 3, and 5, the independent claims, have been amended to define more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention.

The Office Action rejected Claims 1, 3, 5-7, and 9-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The Office Action states that the claims allegedly contain subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. In particular, the Office Action states that the recitation of “an attitude of a user continuously being toward the display device” is allegedly not described in the specification.

Without conceding the propriety of the rejection under Section 112, first paragraph, Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 3, and 5 to recite “a concentration of a user is continuously toward the display device”. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection under Section 112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 5-7, and 9-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,330,022 (Seligmann) in view of U.S. Patent 6,025,870 (Hardy) and U.S. Patent 6,195,104 (Lyons).

Claim 1 is directed to a control method for a home office system that includes user terminal devices each of which includes a display device. A monitoring step includes monitoring a period when the concentration of a user is continuously toward the

display device based on an image of the user picked up by a camera. A control step includes automatically changing a display on the display device to a display of a common virtual space for rest by informally communicating with other users when it is determined that the user should take a rest, based on a result obtained in the monitoring step that the concentration of the user is continuously toward the display device for a period longer than a predetermined time set by the user in advance, so that the user may informally communicate with other users present in the common virtual space for rest.

Among other notable features of Claim 1, the method includes automatically changing a display on a display device to a display of a common virtual space for rest by informally communicating with other users when it is determined that a user should take a rest, based on a result obtained in monitoring a period when the concentration of the user is continuously toward the display device for a period longer than a predetermined time set by the user in advance, as recited in Claim 1.

Seligmann, as understood by Applicant, relates to a digital processing apparatus and method to support video conferencing in variable contexts.

Lyons, as understood by Applicants, relates to a system and method for permitting three-dimensional navigation through a virtual reality environment using camera-based gesture inputs.

Hardy, as understood by Applicants, relates to automatic switching of video conferencing focus.

Nothing in Seligmann, Lyons, or Hardy, whether considered either separately or in any permissible combination (if any) would teach or suggest automatically changing a display on a display device to a display of a common virtual space for rest by

informally communicating with other users when it is determined that a user should take a rest, based on a result obtained in monitoring a period when the concentration of the user is continuously toward the display device for a period longer than a predetermined time set by the user in advance, as recited in Claim 1. By virtue of the features of Claim 1, when the concentration of one user is continuously toward the display device for a period longer than the predetermined time, the displayed content on the relevant display device is changed to the common virtual space for rest by informally communicating with other users, so that the relevant user can relax. Applicants have found nothing in Seligmann, Lyons, or Hardy, whether considered either separately or in any permissible combination (if any) that would teach or suggest the recited virtual space of Claim 1.

Accordingly, Claim 1 is seen to be clearly allowable over Seligmann, Lyons, or Hardy, either separately or in any permissible combination (if any).

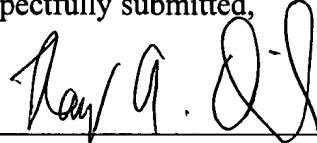
Independent Claims 3 and 5 are computer-readable storage medium and control apparatus claims, respectively, corresponding to method Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from independent Claim 5 discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray A. DiPerna", written over a horizontal line.

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